

From: doran.holm@chipvalley.com
Sent: Thursday, June 08, 2006 10:23 AM
To: NOP Livestock
Subject: Pasture Policy

Attachments: ATTACHMENT.TXT

Dear Mr. Mark Bradley and any others that it may concern:

My name is Doran Holm, I am an organic dairy farmer in West Central Wisconsin. I farm 100 acres with 40 organic Jersey cows plus youngstock. My farm is all grass, I buy my grains. My cows graze the whole farm. They are moved every 12 hours after they are milked so they get new grass after every milking from mid April until the grass is gone in November. Then they move around outside during the day eating from movable hay feeders. They stay in the barn at night in the winter and a few days in the winter they stay in when it is real cold out. Otherwise, they like to go out.

It is imperative that you come up with a rule for grazing for organic herds that states that you must graze your cattle. It is crazy to think that a herd can be organic just by eating organic certified feed and never going off concrete. Cows were created LONG before concrete and they are grassland, prairie animals. Their favorite food is grass and meadow flowers. I wish you could be here after any milking morning or night when we take down the poly wire and step-in posts and give them a few new acres for the next 12 hours. Those girls never tire of getting a new swath of grass. They love it and they are so healthy and happy. That is as big a part of being ORGANIC as is the health treatments they receive and the rest of the feed they eat when they come to get milked or during the winter when there is no grass.

"Organic" means to be natural, as close to what they would do on their own if no one built a barn, poured concrete and put up fences. Cows are many ways like the family pet, they like to come in, and they like to go out. But a cat or dog that never leaves the house is not living the way nature would have it. They could not be considered "Organic." A cow needs to be out like a cow was meant to be to be organic.

Folks who spend a fortune at the grocery store for organic milk expect that this is how the cows are living. I know because I have spoken to many of them at many trade shows and events. It cost more money to make milk this way and you do not get the production you get by keeping them in and feeding them a total mixed ration. The "famers" that are doing this and getting organic price for their milk are giving the organic community a HUGE black eye and it needs to stop.

Please make the rule and make organic dairy farming what it should be . . . Please !!

Thank you,

Doran Holm, Mariann Holm
of Holm Girls Dairy
with Sarah 15, Andrea 14, Erika 14, Laura 11, Rachel 8, Mary 7

715-879-4440, call anytime, or come and visit when you are in the area.

p.s. we are the featured farm family this month at www.organicvalley.coop Just click on the "meet the farmers" icon and read and hear our story.

Take a minute to do so. I think you will really like it. Especially Sarah's story. The cow in the story she tells is the last cow shown in the moving pictures.